

Work life Balance Practices in India

Rajeswari Madey¹, Dr. S. Anitha Devi²

¹Assistant Professor, Sun International Institute of Tourism and Management, Vsp & Research Scholar, Acharya Nagarjuna University, Guntur, AP (India)

²Associate Professor & Head of the Department, TJPS College, Guntur, AP (India)

ABSTRACT

In today's world conflict between work and personal life of an employee is a worldwide conception. In this competitive market every employee is having a problem in balancing the professional and personal life. Work-Life Balance Practices importance has been recognized by IT sectors and they have applied some of them to improve employee productivity. This study is an attempt to understand the work life balance issues. This work illustrates the literature on work life balance policies and practices and work place culture in diverse industries in order to improve their output cut absenteeism etc.

Key words: work-life balance, work life balance practices, benefits

I. INTRODUCTION

In today's global environment employees are facing conflict between their work and personal life. To achieve goals they have to work for longer hours thereby compromising their time for personal life which results in a stress full life for employees. With the passage of time the relevance of work life balance becomes very important when family responsibilities increase and care for children and other dependent become priority. Having a well balanced work life will result in a happy, well motivated, committed employee and the sign of a poor work life balance include high stress, overtime, absenteeism and staff turnover.

Definition of work life balance: There is no definite definition of work life balance. It differs according to the individual perception. Followings are some definition given by researchers.

What makes an average Indian's work-life balance sound like a page from Dante's Inferno? Well, the fact that based on a study for Arcadis' Sustainable Cities Index of 2016, all the major Indian metros have less than 20% people index. In layman speak, it means that work-life balance, among other factors such as affordability, income equality, gender equality, health, education and crime reduction, are in need of a do over.

Work life balance is important. Trust the experts. They say that a severely biased focus on your job can compromise your relationships, your mental and physical well being, and ultimately your focus and efficiency at work, making the point of the added attention to work quite pointless. Well, same goes for trouble in your personal affairs. It does find a way to creep into your profession. People suffering from a lack of a happy medium may go through at least one of absenteeism, high stress, low productivity and in its worse, job attrition. Employers too suffer from high employee turnover, lack of efficient workers, MIA workers and an overall lack of skilled employees, who find it better to just quit and move to more love.

Gender Roles

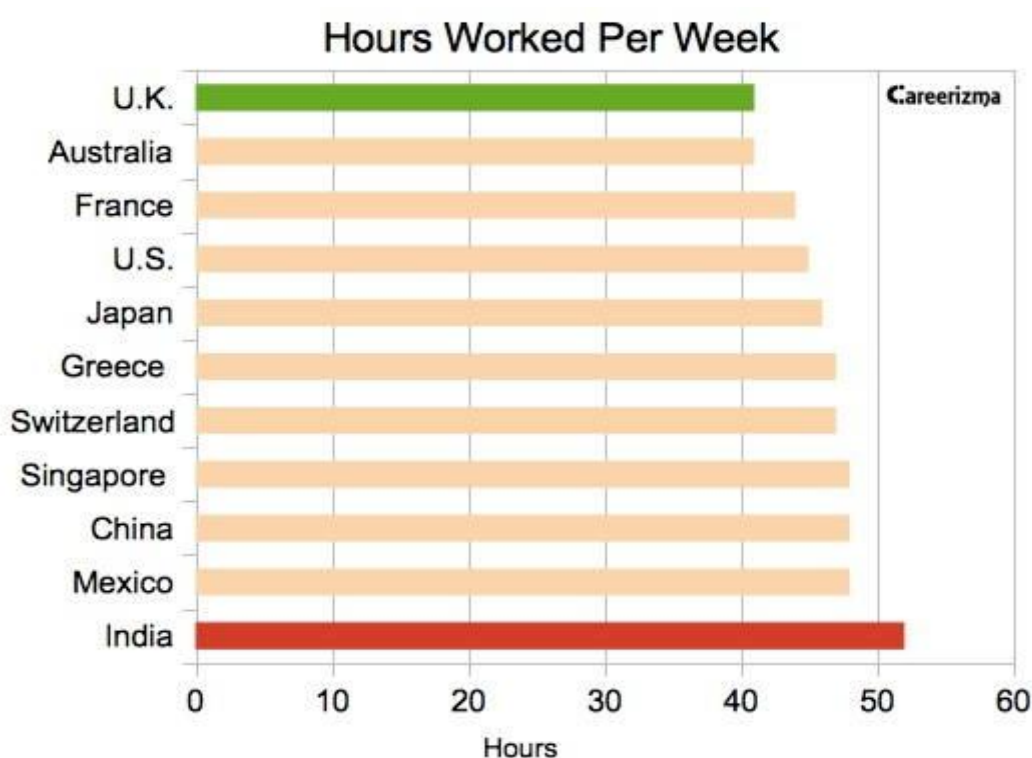
Women, in our country, are faced with a more difficult work-life balancing act as compared to men. A study published in the Indian Journal of Psychological Medicine, there are two factors that trouble working women, especially ones with kids and aging family members, Family-Work (FWC) and Work-Family (WFC) conflicts. According to the study, done on urban women employees with a mean age of 38.7 years, with none to two children, both the factors are highly affected by their circumstances. FWC, which is a measure of how work negatively impacts ones' family, and WFC, which is a measure of how badly home affects ones' work, were measured and statistically analyzed for 90 participants. Both the factors showed means reflecting a troubling pattern of a negative spill over. Subjects, with children, had a significantly bad influence coming from their complimentary sphere of life. Family expectations, household demands, uncompromising company policies, unsupportive supervisors and the inflexible work schedules add to the grief of working women. Read How to manage motherhood and career.

What you see is more women leaving the work force after unsuccessfully juggling two demanding roles – Superwoman and Mama Bear! Unfortunate, as it is, in the last decade, the Indian female labour participation has gone down to 27% from the 37%, the decade before, based on data from the International Labour Organization.

Maybe a move in the positive direction would be to make it possible for women, especially mothers, not to be pushed to a corner, making a Sophie's choice between their family and the work that supports them financially. It is not hard to conjure up some measures to help them out. Besides a cultural overhaul where husbands, and the society at large, realize their roles in sharing responsibilities, companies too can do their yearly good deeds by initiating certain policies, which will come later in this article.

Work Policies

A solid work life balance means having a meaningful participation in all the aspects of a wholesome life – family, work, friends and yourself. According to a study on millennial everywhere, the Manpower group has gathered data showing the number of hours worked by country. The report says Indian millennial put in the longest number of working hours per week. 52 hours to be exact. Compare that to China's 48, USA's 45 and UK's 41 hours.



II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study initiatives taken by some selected companies in India.
2. To study the reasons behind the need of work life balance practices in India.
3. To find out the benefits of WLBP to the employer and employees.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research paper being descriptive in nature has the inputs from secondary data using referred journals, research studies, magazines, news paper articles, Government statistics, websites and internet.

Literature review:-

Ms. Chanda Kochhar, MD & CEO, ICICI Bank said (International women's Day): 'Although women form 48% of the population in our country, their representation in the workforce is much lower than men. Many women who join the workforce are sometimes forced to take a break or even leave their jobs, due to various life stage needs like maternity and child care. Lack of support system due to predominance of nuclear families, inadequate infrastructural facilities like crèches and long commute time further accentuates the problem. To ensure that the working women do not leave the workforce, there is a strong need for a robust support system, both at home and at work.'

Deepti Sinha, 2013 (Journal of Management Sciences And Technology 1 (1), Oct - 2013) conducted a study regarding perception of employees towards WLBP in CCIL (Clearing Corporation of India Ltd.) and their agreeableness with it. She found that majority of employees are aware of WLBP and the employees feel that there is a need to improve WLBP in the organization.

Burke (1991 & 2010) examined the relationship between the perception of men regarding their understanding of organizational values which favor WLB in their work place & their work experiences. Unlike other studies which focus more on the opinion of women it is a study based on the perceptions of men. The organizational values of managerial men were supportive of work-personal life and report working fewer hours, less job stress, greater joy in work, lower intention to quit, greater job career & life satisfaction, fewer psychosomatic symptoms and more positive emotional & physical wellbeing.

Valcour and Hunter (2005), the home working can lead to greater flexibility and independence, but it can make people work for longer periods of time, including weekends and evenings. Home environment also plays a very important role in the quality of life. Home working could be stressful, if young children have to be managed.

A study conducted by Manisha Purohit, found that only 30% of service sector (software) have WLBP policies and these are the companies having international exposure linkages. Flexible working hours is more common in service sector especially in IT industry (80% of IT industry) and no company in manufacturing industry have such programs. Work from home is not very popular among service and manufacturing sector but only two-fifth (40%) of IT industry offer such policy. Sabbatical, paternity leave, job sharing, part time work are absent in Indian manufacturing and service sector. All companies have provision of maternity leave and it is prescribed by maternity benefit act, 1961.

Ioanlazar, Codruta Osoian, Patriciaratiu (2010) in their research study said that availability and use of work-life balance practices, when provided in the context of supervisor and organizational support can reduce work-life conflict and increase positive appraisals of one's organization. These effects are often associated with employee attitudes such as increased job satisfaction, reduced absenteeism, and increased productivity, organizational commitment and loyalty with higher levels of organizational performance.

The ILO released a report in March 2013 comparing maternity and paternity leave entitlements in various geographies. Russia and Italy provide the maximum leave entitlements for maternity and paternity leaves with as many as 140 leave entitlements (20 weeks), followed by Brazil (17⁺ weeks). The ILO also corroborates that India is among the nations where average maternity leave entitlement is among the lowest in the world. Besides that, a majority (50%) of organizations in India provide less than a week's time off for paternity. Some nations such as the UK, provide a maximum of 280 days of maternity and paternity leaves with as much as 90% of pay.

IV. WORK LIFE BALANCE PRACTICES CAN BE CLASSIFIED INTO

1. Policies:

It covers the formal & informal ways by which employees' work & leave schedules are handled, including part time work, flexi time & parental or family leave.

2. Benefits:

These are different forms of compensation that protect against loss of earnings, payment of medical expenses & sponsored vacation.

3. Services:

It includes onsite or near site childcare centers, medical facilities & counseling.

V. WLBP FOUND IN INDIA

In India two types of WLBP are found: Statutory and non statutory.

1. Factories Act, 1948: according to Factories Act, 1948, no adult worker shall be allowed to work in a factory for more than 48 hours in a week, 9 hours in a day & on first day of the week. Every employee who has worked for a period of 240 days or more in a calendar year shall be allowed for leave with wages & it is calculated as one day leave for every 20 days of work performed by the employee. This Act also provides crèches, where 30 or more women are working.

2. Maternity benefit Act, 1961: According to Maternity Benefit Act, 1961, a working woman is allowed for a paid leave of 12 weeks, 6 weeks before delivery & 6 weeks after delivery. This is same for the case of miscarriage. This Act enables the working women financially stable during pregnancy. This Act also provides 2 nursing breaks per day.

3. Indian Penal Code, 1869, section 509(amended): sexual harassment in the work place: this Act provides protection to the working women in the work place.

Non statutory benefits are the optional in nature. It's up to the employer whether he/she is interested to give it to his/her employees. Most IT industries have initiated flexi time, compressed work week, work from home, vacations, child day care facilities etc. following are some examples of WLBP's adopted in India & outside India.

According to Paul Wolfe, Senior VP of HR for Indeed: "In today's tight labour market, proper work-life balance practices are essential for employee retention. Companies who are empathetic and proactively work to provide the appropriate personal time for employees tend to stand out." Surprisingly, most of the companies that are listed in Indeed's survey all outside the specialised fields of tech and finance, which is at odds with its promotion of employee-benefit culture. However, most of this hail from a diversified series of fields and industries like transportation, healthcare, food retailers, consumer products, and more.

Benefits to the employers:-

Followings are the benefits that are being researched by various academicians and researchers.

Work-life balance practices

- reduced staff turnover(Lobel & Kossek, 1996)
- lower recruitment and training costs, due to decreased turnover
- reduced absenteeism due to higher levels of well being
- gaining a reputation as a good employer or an employer of choice
- Improved recruitment and retention rates(allen, 2001; Anderson, Coffey & Byerly,2002; Honeycut & Rosen 1997; Konard & Mangal,2002; Kosssek & Ozeki 1998)
- reduced stress levels amongst staff (Thompson & protas, 2006)
- improved morale and job satisfaction
- greater staff loyalty and commitment
- improved productivity(Sands & Harpper, 2007)
- reduced absenteeism(Dex & Scheibl,1999; Lobel & Kossek,1996; Osterman,1995; Thompson,Beauvais & Lyness,1999)

Employees Benefits:

- Being effectively manage multiple responsibilities at work, home and in the society without any stress (Thomas & Ganster, 1995)
- Reduced stress levels and higher levels of well being(Thompson & protas, 2006)
- Control over time management in meeting work life commitments
- Autonomy to make decisions regarding work life balance
- Increased focus, motivation and job satisfaction (Kossek & Ozeki, 1998) knowing that family and work commitments are being met.
- Increased job security from the knowledge that an organization understands and supports workers with family responsibilities
- Increased employee engagement (Susi S, Jawaharrani K, 2011)
- Increased employee commitment (Dex & Smith, 2002)

If you thought that salary/ compensation is the number one reason driving professional satisfaction among employees, prepare to be surprised.

A survey done by global specialist recruitment firm Michael Page India reveals that the aspiration to acquire new skills and a better work-life balance are the top two factors driving satisfaction. Better compensation comes third in the factors that keep employees happy.

The Job Confidence Index Q1 2017 analysed the responses of 650 employees in India and 4,700 across the Asia-Pacific region.

The results indicate that the three primary objectives for seeking employment in India remain unchanged, with 48 per cent of individuals aspiring to acquire new skills, 39 per cent yearning for a better work-life balance and 34 per cent considering income a significant factor.

A better work-life balance has now surpassed salary for the second most important driver when job hunting in India.

“A robust demand for qualified professionals in a competitive market has resulted in the importance of skill enhancement among millennials,” said Nicolas Dumoulin, MD, Michael Page India. “On the backdrop of an improved economic environment and adaptation to global culture, Indian professionals have a positive outlook towards a rise in job opportunities, wage growth and a better work life balance. Their appetite to acquire new skills outweighs other job search push factors.”

CONCLUSION

According to the study, a sizeable number of employees in India (53 per cent) have responded that they consider the state of the current national economy as “good to excellent” as opposed to only 33 per cent of employees in the Asia-Pacific region.

The findings further show that 62 per cent of Indian employees are “satisfied or very satisfied” with their working conditions as compared to 53 per cent of employees in the Asia-Pacific.

In a city by city comparison, job satisfaction levels of employees in Delhi, Bengaluru and Chennai saw a dip whereas Mumbai was in line with the survey findings in the previous quarter.

REFERENCES

- [1] Jennifer Redmond, Maryann Valiulis and Eileen Drew (2006), Literature review of issues related to work-life balance, workplace culture and maternity/childcare issues, Crisis Pregnancy Agency, Report No. 16, ISBN: 1-905199-07-4.
- [2] Susi.S & Jawaharrani.K,(2011), , Work-Life Balance: The key driver of employee engagement, ASIAN JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT RESEARCH ,Volume 2 Issue 1,ISSN 2229 – 3795
- [3] Deepti Sinha (2013), Study of Work Life Balance @ CCIL (India), NOIDA, Journal of Management Sciences And Technology 1 (1)
- [4] R. Baral, S. Bhargava,(2011), HR interventions for work-life balance: evidences from organisations in India, International Journal of Business, Management and Social Sciences,Vol. 2, No. 1, pp. 33-42, ,
- [5] R.J.Burke,(2002) “Organizational values, job experiences and satisfaction among managerial and professional women and men: Advantage men, Women in Management Review, Volume.17, Issue.No.5, pp.5 & 6.
- [6] Manisha Purohit(2013), A Comparative Study Of Work Life Balance In Various Industrial Sectors In Pune Region, International Journal of Marketing, Financial Services & Management Research ISSN 2277- 3622 ,Vol.2, No. 3